

TOP SECRETACTION
July 9, 1970NSS, State Dept.,
OSD reviews
completed*is edited
sent
2013 10/29*

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: "Re-aligned Configuration" of Two U.S. Divisions in
Korea

Ambassador Porter and General Michaelis have suggested that one way for us to ease President Park's political problems over U.S. troop reductions would be to retain both U.S. divisions in a "re-aligned" configuration involving the replacement of U.S. brigades being withdrawn by ROK brigades. Divisional command would be retained by the U.S. (See Ambassador Porter's back-channel message at Tab B.) You have asked if we could do this.

Theoretically speaking, there would appear to be no reason why the re-alignment suggested by Ambassador Porter and General Michaelis cannot be carried out. There is a long history of Koreans serving with American units under U.S. command, dating all the way back to the Korean war. KATUSAs (Korean Army troops assigned to U.S. Army units) still are a feature of our forces in Korea, and the addition of two ROK brigades to a U.S. division to replace two U.S. brigades would not be a vast change from this pattern. If it would meet President Park's political desiderata of retaining what could be described two U.S. divisions, we would want to consider carrying this recommendation out.

However, information which has just been provided by Defense on our proposed troop reductions indicates that one entire division is to be withdrawn along with Army and Corps supporting units, leaving one division consisting of eight maneuver battalions. The question here is whether there would be enough of a U.S. framework remaining upon which a mixed U.S. - ROK division under U.S. command could be assembled. It might be possible to apportion the U.S. battalions in such a way as to provide a nucleus for two divisions, with the rest made of ROKs, but I suspect that Defense would balk at having U.S. forces in such a minority position. This would also require around four ROK brigades, not the two

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

2

which Ambassador Porter and General Michaelis call for in their proposal. Alternatively one mixed division could be assembled, leaving the U. S. division considerably under strength. Porter and Michaelis are evidently operating on the assumption that two brigades from the U. S. 2nd Division are to be removed, but that one will remain to which two ROK brigades could be added. I recall from earlier discussions with Defense on U. S. force reductions in Korea that Defense was thinking in such terms, but the signals appear to have been switched. Ambassador Porter might be asked if his proposal is fully compatible with the latest Defense planning.

Assuming that this proposal is compatible with Defense planning, another problem is involved: that of retaining U. S. forces along the DMZ. One feature of the present reduction plan is that with the exception of one company rotated to Panmunjom for security duty from the remaining U. S. divisions, the ROKs would man the entire DMZ. Under Ambassador Porter's concept, the two ROK brigades in the 2nd Division would assume places on the line, thereby leaving what in name would be a full U. S. division along the DMZ.. The advantages of a U. S. pull-back would then no longer obtain, i. e. lowering the chances of a direct U. S. -North Korean confrontation from the very outset of a significant North Korean military move across the DMZ. I believe that Ambassador Porter might be asked for his thoughts on this issue.

Another immediate problem I can foresee is the purely technical one of getting Ambassador Porter's message into regular instead of back channels. It will be difficult for you to discuss this question with Secretary Laird or anyone else in Defense until it has come to us through either State or Defense channels. I suggest that a message go back to Ambassador Porter telling him that we think this proposal has merit but recommend that he forward it through regular State or Defense communications. We could also ask him to address the two problems mentioned above. I have drafted a message from you to Ambassador Porter to this effect (Tab A).

Larry Lynn concurs.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you clear the message to Ambassador Porter at Tab A.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

DRAFT MESSAGE FROM DR. KISSINGER TO AMBASSADOR PORTER

Yours and General Michaelis' suggestion for the "re-aligned configuration" of the U.S. divisions in Korea appears very interesting, and I believe that it should be given full State and Defense consideration. To this end, suggest that you put this matter into regular channels, using either State or Defense communications as you consider appropriate. There is a question in my mind about your suggestion's compatability with Defense planning, however, since the latest word we have is that one entire division is to be removed and that the remaining division will contain eight maneuver battalions. Is this a sufficient framework upon which to implement your proposal? If so, I would also appreciate your thoughts as to whether the presence on the DMZ of the ROK brigades/^{assigned}to a division under U.S. command would in effect be stationing a full U.S. division on the line, and whether this would be desirable.

*under some of
the effects of a redeployment.*

TOP SECRET

R 01381Z

FM SEOUL

TO THE WHITE HOUSE

ZEN

TOP SECRET 01225Z JUL 72

CTB-HK 230C3

25X1

25X1

FM AMBASSADOR PORTER SEOUL 632

TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. HENRY KISSINGER

1. IT IS OF COURSE EVIDENT TO YOU FROM ROK REACTION GENERALLY THAT THERE IS DEEP PUBLIC ATTACHMENT TO U.S. PRESENCE IN KOREA. FROM RECENT PERSONAL TESTING OF PUBLIC MIND IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN EASTERN PART OF COUNTRY, IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT PUBLIC IS DISTURBED BECAUSE OF PREVAILING OPINION THAT COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES IS ENVISAGED. THIS IS OF COURSE DIRECT RESULT OF ROK GOVT'S HANDLING OF ISSUE.

2. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE NOW GETTING INDICATIONS THAT PARK UNDERSTANDS THAT OUR INTENTIONS ARE FIRM. HE HAS CALLED PARTY LEADERS TOGETHER AND HAS RESERVED TO HIMSELF PRIVILEGE OF MAKING ANY FUTURE STATEMENTS ON SUBJECT. HE HAS MADE CLEAR TO PARTY CHIEFS THAT TROOP WITHDRAWAL WILL AMOUNT TO TWENTY THOUSAND MEN, AND HE ADDED THAT HE INTENDS TO PROTECT HIMSELF POLITICALLY BY MAKING IT CLEAR THAT HE HAS DONE HIS BEST TO PREVENT OR RETARD ANY WITHDRAWAL.

3. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, MICHAELIS AND I FEEL WE MUST GIVE CLOSE ATTENTION TO COSMETICS OF MATTER. ONE OF THINGS ROKS FEAR MOST IS EFFECT ON THEIR PEOPLE OF WITHDRAWAL OF ONE OF AMERICAN DIVISIONS, WHICH AS WE SEE IT NOW WOULD BE SECOND DIVISION. WE HAVE, OF COURSE, AVOIDED MENTION OF DIVISION AS SUCH, BUT MOST OF ELEMENTS OF SECOND WOULD BE INCLUDED IN FIGURE OF TWENTY THOUSAND MEN. REMAINING ELEMENTS OF SECOND WOULD BE ATTACHED TO SEVENTH DIVISION.

4. I THINK IT WOULD GO LONG WAY TO EASE PARK'S POLITICAL PROBLEM IF WE COULD SAY THAT BOTH DIVISIONS WILL REMAIN IN "RE-ALIGNED CONFIGURATION." MICHAELIS BELIEVES THIS QUITE POSSIBLE IF TWO OF THREE BRIGADES OF SECOND DIVISION WERE REPLACED BY ROK BRIGADES, AND "REALIGNED" SECOND DIVISION THUS CREATED WOULD REMAIN UNDER U.S. COMMAND. ROK BRIGADES INSERTED INTO SECOND DIVISION WOULD REPLACE AMERICANS ALONG DMZ, WITH EXCEPTION OF SMALL AMERICAN UNIT AT PANMUNJON. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT WITH AMERICAN COMMANDER AT CORPS LEVEL AND WITH HIS OPERATIONAL CONTROL AS UN COMMANDER, COMMAND PROBLEMS WOULD BE MANAGEABLE.

5. A FURTHER ASPECT OF SUCH ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MODERNIZATION PLAN FOR ROK FORCES WOULD BE THAT AS AMERICAN PERSONNEL OF SECOND DIVISION ARE WITHDRAWN, THEY WOULD LEAVE THEIR EQUIPMENT BEHIND. THAT EQUIPMENT, IF PRESENT OR IMPENDING LEGISLATION MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO EFFECT TRANSFER TO ROK FORCES, WOULD REMAIN U.S. PROPERTY BUT ROK ELEMENTS OF SECOND DIVISION WOULD BE PERMITTED TO USE IT UNTIL MEANS OF TRANSFER UNDER OUR MODERNIZATION PLANS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

6. WE WOULD THUS ACCOMPLISH FOUR THINGS. WE WOULD WITHDRAW TROOPS, INCLUDING MOST OF SECOND DIVISION, AS WE DESIRE TO DO. WE WOULD REMOVE OUR TROOPS FROM DMZ (EXCEPT FOR PANNUNJOM) WHICH IS ONE OF OUR AIMS. WE WOULD PROVIDE PARK WITH BASIS FOR CLAIMING THAT AT HIS INSISTENCE SECOND WAS RECONFIGURED, NOT WITHDRAWN. AND FINALLY, WE WOULD HAVE

END PAGE ONE

EQUIPMENT AT HAND WHICH WOULD EFFECT BEGINNING OF MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR ROK FORCES. IF THIS APPROACH SEEMS FEASIBLE AT YOUR END, IT WOULD PROBABLY PROVIDE US WITH CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE HERE WHEN WE DECIDE TO GET THINGS MOVING.

7. THIS THINKING HAS NOT YET BEEN PASSED TO PENTAGON OR STATE, WHERE OTHER PLANS MAY BE DEVELOPING. I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE IT NOW BECAUSE IT WOULD PROBABLY KEEP OUR RELATIONS WITH PARK SMOOTHER THAN IF WE SIMPLY ELIMINATE SECOND DIVISION AS PENTAGON MAY WISH TO DO. I MAY BE PAYING TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO PROBLEMS OF FACE OUT HERE, BUT THEY DO EXIST, AND WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO EASE PUBLIC MIND AND HELP PARK GET OUT OF HOLE WHICH HE AND HIS MINISTERS HAVE DUG FOR THEMSELVES.

GP-1

300

TOP SECRET

NNNN